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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2601

March 12, 1993

RURAL HOUSING PROGRAMS -- In testimony to the Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development of the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy said that USDA plans to continue and strengthen the rural housing programs of the Department's Farmers Home Administration. Funding will be expanded for single-family self-help home loans. Espy urged increased funding for home repair loans and grants, housing preservation grants, and flexibility in use of funds for rural multi-family housing and rental assistance. **Contact: Joe O'Neill (202) 720-4323.**

WIND EROSION -- Great Plains States suffered substantially less wind erosion during November and December compared to the same period a year earlier. While 1.2 million acres of cropland and rangeland were damaged, the figure is down almost 350,000 acres. Of the total damaged by wind erosion, 91 percent was cropland, 9 percent was primarily rangeland. Galen Bridge, acting chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service, attributes the decrease to good soil moisture, the Great Plains Conservation Programs and implementation of conservation plans under the 1990 Farm Bill. **Contact: Brad Fisher (202) 720-4024.**

WHITEFLY ENEMIES -- 17 different species that are enemies of sweetpotato whiteflies have been collected in six countries, and will be made available to USDA scientists. Richard Soper, at USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Beltsville, MD, says this gives researchers the most diverse pool to date of natural candidates for controlling whiteflies, improving the odds that a match can be made with a specific natural enemy to do the best job against the pest. Whiteflies have caused million of dollars damage to growers in California, Arizona, Texas, and Florida. **Contact: Jim De Quattro (301) 504-8648.**

FRUIT FLY -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has transferred \$16 million in emergency funds for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to continue its cooperative effort to eradicate the Mediterranean fruit fly in California. Federal and state employees have been regulating the movement of vegetables and fruits in the Los Angeles and San Jose County areas, applying ground sprays, and releasing sterile flies in the effort to eradicate the pest. The fly attacks more than 200 kinds of fruits and vegetables, and can cause complete loss of crops. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 436-7799.**

CARBOHYDRATES AND STRENGTH -- Eating more carbohydrates did not improve the endurance or strength of men who exercise moderately, unlike the payoffs for athletes who train long and hard. Researchers at USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center, Beltsville, MD, found that volunteers could not significantly exercise longer after three weeks of getting 62 percent of their calories as carbohydrates than when they received 42 percent carbohydrates. The findings underscore that eating carbohydrates probably won't improve performance during moderate exercise, but it reduces fat intake and that's beneficial. **Contact: Joan Conway (301) 504-8977.**

OFFICIALS NOMINATED -- Seven senior officials have been nominated by President Clinton for positions at USDA. Eugene Moos, president of Gene Moos & Associates, a Washington, D.C. lobbying firm, has been nominated for Undersecretary for International Affairs and Commodity Programs; Richard Rominger, former director of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, 1977 to 1982, for Deputy Secretary; Wardell Townsend, Jr., former administrative assistant to Congressman Espy, for Assistant Secretary for Administration; Francis Vacca, president of Vacca and Associates, a private consulting firm in Washington, D.C., for Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations; James Gilliland, an attorney with experience in agricultural commodities, for General Counsel; James Lyons, former staff director of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Forests, Family Farms, and Energy, for Assistant Secretary of Natural Resources and the Environment; and Bob Nash, president of the Arkansas Development Finance Authority, for Under Secretary for Small Community and Rural Development.

HAY -- While corn and sorghum silage production increased last season, boosting total roughage supplies by one percent over 1991/92 figures, cattle numbers are up from last year and severe weather this winter has sharply increased the need for supplemental feeding. Hay production declined 3 percent last year, and as a result end-of-season hay stocks are likely to be below a year earlier. Those having to purchase will notice a difference in prices. **Contact: Tom Tice (202) 219-0840.**

FOOD ASSISTANCE -- Latest figures show that the federal government spent a record \$28.9 billion in fiscal year 1991 for domestic food and nutrition programs, 16 percent above the \$25 billion spent in 1990. The increase was almost entirely due to higher participation and costs of the Food Stamp Program, the largest federal food assistance program. Expenditures for the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, Child and Adult Care Food, and Summer Food Service Programs totaled \$6 billion, an 11 percent increase over 1990. The National School Lunch Program served 24 million children in 91,000 participating schools. The fastest growing food assistance program is the Child and Adult Care Food Program, serving 1 billion meals in fiscal 1991. **Contact Masao Matsumoto (202) 219-0864.**

IMPROVING POOR SOILS -- Phosphorus is a major nutrient limitation to successful forage production, but many farmers can't afford the commercial fertilizer and lime additions generally recommended for pasture improvement. Scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service have found rock phosphate can be added to highly acid soils because the acidity causes the rock to dissolve into a form that roots can absorb. Rock phosphate in soil raises pH slightly, increases the availability of calcium and phosphorus to roots, while decreasing the toxicity of aluminum. The result is better root growth, and improved water and nutrient use in infertile acid soils such as that found in Appalachia. **Contact: V.C. Baligar (304) 252-6426.**

AT HOME AND ABROAD -- U.S. agricultural commodities will find expanded markets at home, and stronger demand abroad this year. Domestic use of crops is expected to rise 4 to 5 percent, led by a 5 percent gain in feed use to support expansion in animal numbers and generally lower prices. Food use of crops and demand for animal products will increase with population growth and continued economic recovery. Ag exports will continue to be a growth market for U.S. farmers, rising in response to reforms in trade policies and worldwide economic growth. **Contact: James Donald (202) 720-6030.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1866 -- In this edition **Maria Bynum** talks with farmers about why farm numbers are declining across the nation. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1348 -- Bloomin' bushes; project harmony; more nutritious rice; the researcher's apprentice; medfly project update. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1858 -- USDA news highlights; top crops; 1992 corn and sorghum deficiency payments; low input farming research; U.S. farm census. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1611 -- Asian Beetle in Brazil; promising whitefly pathogen; secrets of the "mummies"; future fall Armyworm control; sweetpotatoes as a weapon. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, Mar. 22, U.S. trade update, livestock & poultry update, catfish processing; Tuesday, Mar. 23, crop & weather update; Wednesday, Mar. 24, aquaculture outlook; Friday, Mar. 26, hog & pig numbers; Monday, Mar. 29, world cocoa situation. These are the **USDA reports we know about in advance**. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on the Extension Service super pantry program; and Pat O'Leary takes a look at top crops.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on the weather and crop situation; USDA economist **Gary Lucier** on Arizona flood damage to vegetables; **John Werner**, USDA Soil Conservation Service, on wind erosion damage in the Great Plains; USDA economist **Tom Tice** on feed outlook; USDA analyst **Steve MacDonald** on agricultural trade; and USDA historian **Doug Bowers** on National Agriculture Day.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- DeBoria Janifer reports on nutrition and pregnancy; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on USDA's national parasite collection; and **Pat O'Leary** on the dry edible bean.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update** with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

PEOPLE PULLED TOGETHER...to help those devastated by the Gila River flood, says **George Gatley** (Western Agri-Radio Networks, Yuma, AZ). The National Guard and pickup truck owners helped to move cattle and household items to higher ground. People donated to food banks and other organizations helping families and farm workers. George covered it all for his audience. 20,000 acres are under water, about 1/3 of the county's growing area. There will be no planting in the flooded area this year. George says irrigation ditches must be cleared and repaired, fields leveled and leached salt removed. And work will likely be delayed because temperatures are warming, melting the mountain snow and maintaining a high rate of water flow through the river. George says the flood's impact will be long-lasting on affected farms and migrant workers.

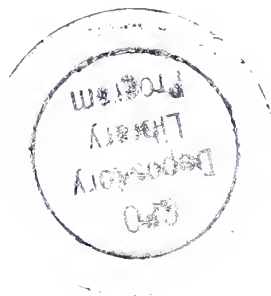
THANKS...for the letter from **Jim Rodenburg**, executive secretary of the Omaha Livestock Exchange, and associate member of NAFB, who also writes a column for the "Council Bluffs (Iowa) Nonpareil," and other newspapers. Jim sent a copy of a column he wrote about spring weather conditions based on an item he saw in the Farm Broadcasters Letter.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



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MEETINGS...of the major national associations kept **Mike Adams** (WLDS, Jacksonville, IL) on the road this winter. Mike says he hears members saying that Sec. Espy has made a good first impression at the national meetings. Mike notes there is optimism about spring growing conditions, but a wait and see attitude on what the budget will do to farm programs. Planting in Mike's area will get underway in about two weeks. Producers say they need dry weather to complete their field work.

CONGRATULATIONS...to **Warren Nielson** (KMTV, Omaha, NB). This month marks his 50th continuous year in broadcasting, 40 of those years in farm broadcasting. Warren served 43 years in radio, starting at KSCJ in Sioux City, Iowa in March 1943. He was on the air 25 years at KMA, Shenandoah, IA, and broadcast for 16 years at KFAB, Omaha. He became farm director at KMTV in 1962. He says his 40 years in farm broadcasting have provided the opportunity to travel and make friends everywhere.

VIC POWELL *Vic Powell*
Chief, Radio & TV Division